

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, immediately beneath the title, please insert the following new paragraph:

This is a National Phase Application in the United States of International Patent Application No. PCT/JP03/02547 filed March 5, 2003, which claims priority on Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-58140, filed March 5, 2002. The entire disclosures of the above patent applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

Page 2, line 19 to Page 3, line 4, please amend the following paragraphs:

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method for producing biodegradable fiber material moldings comprising steps of mixing plant fiber powder with plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter powder, mixing the mixture of the plant fiber powder and the plant binder powder with water to form plant fiber molding material, and putting the plant fiber molding material powder in an injection molding machine or extrusion molding machine as it is to mold ~~it molding the plant fiber molding material~~.

When plant binder powder made of a mixture of starch powder and gummy matter powder is used, it becomes possible to obtain molding material suitably fluidized to fill up a mold when it is injected in an injection molding process or injection press molding process having the same injection step as the injection molding process, while using less water than that used when plant binder powder made of only starch powder is used. The plant fiber molding

material powder produced by processes of mixing plant fiber powder with plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter powder, and mixing the mixture of the plant fiber powder and the plant binder powder with water is imparted with suitable viscosity and flowability. Therefore, it does not need a pre-forming process such as granulation for enhancing ease of carriage by the screw of the injection molding machine because it can be reliably carried by the screw. Therefore, the plant fiber molding material powder can be directly put in an injection molding machine to be brought to the final molding process. Biodegradable fiber material moldings made of the aforementioned molding material can be dried rapidly after they are taken out the molds because they contain little water. Therefore, the method of the present invention can mass-produce biodegradable fiber material moldings inexpensively. The present invention can be suitably used for extrusion molding.

Page 3, line 13, please amend the following paragraph:

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a method for producing biodegradable fiber material moldings comprising steps of mixing 2 to ~~17~~ 7 weight parts of plant fiber powder with 1 weight part of plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter powder, mixing 3 to 9 weight parts of the mixture of the plant fiber powder and the plant binder powder with 1 weight part of water to form plant fiber molding material powder, and ~~putting molding~~ the plant fiber molding material powder in a injection molding machine or extrusion molding machine to mold it.

When 2 to ~~17~~ 7 weight parts of plant fiber powder is mixed with 1 weight part of plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter

powder, and 3 to 9 weight parts of the mixture of the plant fiber powder and the plant binder powder is mixed with 1 weight part of water, it becomes possible to obtain molding material powder suitably fluidized to fill up a mold when it is injected in an injection molding process or injection press molding process having the same injection step as the injection molding process. The aforementioned molding material powder is imparted with suitable viscosity and flowability. Therefore, it does not need a pre-forming process such as granulation for enhancing ease of carriage by the screw of the injection molding machine because it can be reliably carried by the screw. Therefore, the plant fiber molding material powder can be directly put in an injection molding machine to be brought to the final molding process. Biodegradable fiber material moldings made of the aforementioned molding material powder containing little water can be dried rapidly after they are taken out from the molds because they contain little water. Therefore, the method of the present invention can mass-produce biodegradable fiber material moldings inexpensively. The present invention can be suitably used for extrusion molding.

Page 4, line 27 to Page 5, line 1, please amend the following paragraph:

~~In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the plant binder powder is starch powder.~~

Page 5, lines 8 to 17, please amend the following paragraphs:

~~In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the plant binder powder is a mixture of starch powder and gummy matter powder.~~

~~When plant binder powder made of a mixture of starch powder and gummy matter powder is used, it becomes possible to obtain molding material suitably fluidized to fill up a mold when it is injected in an injection molding process or injection press molding process~~

~~having the same injection step as the injection molding process, while using less water than that used when plant binder made of only starch powder is used. The biodegradable fiber material moldings made of the aforementioned molding material can be dried rapidly after they are taken out the molds because they contain little water. Therefore, the method of the present invention can mass produce biodegradable fiber material moldings inexpensively.~~

The ratio of gummy matter powder to the total weight of plant binder powder is desirably equal to or smaller than 15%. If the ratio of gummy matter powder exceeds 15 weight %, the releasability of moldings when they are taken out from molds is degraded.

Page 5, lines 21 to 26, please amend the following paragraphs:

~~In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the gummy matter is water soluble polysaccharide.~~

~~Gummy matter, specifically water~~ Water soluble gummy matter came from water soluble polysaccharide, promotes gelation of starch to promote fluidization of biodegradable fiber molding material, thereby enhancing the workability of the molding material and reinforcing the main structures of the moldings made of plant fiber powder.

Page 10, line 27 to Page 11, line 19, please amend the following paragraphs:

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided biodegradable fiber molding material power for injection molding or extrusion molding comprising plant fiber powder, plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter powder, and water, wherein the plant fiber powder, the plant binder powder and the water are mixed with each other.

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided biodegradable fiber molding material power for injection molding or extrusion molding comprising plant

fiber powder, plant binder powder, which is a mixture of starch powder and water soluble gummy matter powder, and water, wherein the plant fiber powder, the plant binder powder and the water are mixed with each other, and wherein the weight of the plant binder powder is 1/7 to 1/2 of the weight of the plant fiber powder, and the weight of the mixed water is 10 to 25 % of the total weight of the mixture of the plant fiber powder, the plant binder powder and the water.

Biodegradable fiber material moldings made of the biodegradable plant fiber molding material powder having the aforementioned composition ~~in accordance with the present invention~~ contain little water and can be dried rapidly after they are taken out the molds because the biodegradable plant fiber molding material powder having the aforementioned composition ~~in accordance with the present invention~~ contains little water. Therefore, biodegradable fiber material moldings can be mass-produced inexpensively by the use of the molding material powder having the aforementioned composition ~~in accordance with the present invention~~. The biodegradable plant fiber molding material powder having the aforementioned composition ~~in accordance with the present invention~~ can be suitably used for injection molding or injection press molding having the same injection step as the injection molding. The biodegradable plant fiber molding material powder having the aforementioned composition ~~in accordance with the present invention~~ can also be suitably used for extrusion molding, transfer molding or hot press molding.

Page 18, line 22, please amend the following paragraph:

In the mixer 8, the plant fiber material powder with a water content of 4 to 10 weight %, a mixture of starch powder and gummy matter powder, and water are mixed with each other, or 2 to ~~17~~ 7 weight parts of the plant fiber material powder with a water content of 4 to 10 weight % is mixed with 1 weight part of plant binder powder, then 3 to 9 weight parts of

the mixture of the plant fiber powder and the plant binder powder is mixed with 1 weight part of water. Thus, a plant fiber molding material suitable for injection molding is formed.